

Cookman Backflow Testing

RECEIVED
OREGON OPERATIONS OFFICE

U.S. EPA
ATTN: Harbor Comments
805 SW Broadway, Suite 500
Portland, OR 97205

2836

AUG 24 2016

EPA-REGION 10

As the co-owner of Cookman Backflow Testing, I am very aware of the importance of preventing contamination in our water supply. We've been doing this a long time--28 years--and the backflow devices we test are used to prevent cross contamination of sprinkler systems with drinking water. Controlling the contamination in the Willamette River is equally important. Ten miles of the river were designated a Superfund site by the EPA some years ago, but an effective cleanup plan has never been implemented. Now, the EPA has presented a plan which is much too aggressive, too expensive, and too destructive to the overall Portland economy. Portland business owners like me simply cannot support such a plan.

My own business experience tells me that the dredging of large portions of the river over a many years' time frame can create more problems than it solves. We do all we can in our business to prevent contaminants in one system from impacting another one. This is just what the EPA's plan would do. Dredging up contaminants that have been buried for years and letting them loose throughout the waters of the river once again cannot be a good idea. I'm confident that those who use the river and our neighboring cities downstream would agree.

It's been decades since the EPA determined this part of the river needed to be cleaned up, and in that time methodology and data about the river's own processes has changed. The EPA is ignoring this and not considering other approaches. This massive project will be a big money-maker for them, but certainly not good for us. Taking a more conservative approach, like just working on a small test section of the river to see what actually happens, makes more sense. Even just waiting to see if the river continues to heal itself through natural restoration, as it has been doing over these years, seems worth seriously considering.

The large-scale impacts that going forward with the current plan would have on Portland are not being given sufficient consideration. Just from my family's experience, I know they would be significant. We love to go down to the waterfront and have dinner. We go out on the river, and have friends who enjoy fishing and skiing. Many people hike and bike along the river or use the parks along the waterfront. The EPA's plan would create an unnecessary nightmare for all such users of the river for decades to come. It's time for the EPA to reconsider this plan and listen to local voices like mine who say there is clearly a better way to solve this problem.

(b) (6)

Co-Owner

(b) (6)

Portland, OR 97229